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## IF represents Air Force at Venture Capital Conference

*by Fran Crumb, Information Directorate*

ROME, N.Y. — The Air Force Research Laboratory's Information Directorate represented the Air Force at a meeting on a venture capital initiative sponsored last month by the Secretary of Defense at Menlo Park, Calif.

Working with venture capital firms to find emerging commercial technologies that have potential interest to the Department of Defense, the initiative was spawned 18 months ago by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld who asked former U.S. Representative John R. Kasich (R-OH) to bring in a technology group that could filter emerging technologies and identify those most applicable to military requirements.

"The emphasis of this initiative is on fast-tracking, high-pay-off products and services," said Dr. Alan R. Lindsey, an electronics engineer in the directorate's Information Grid Division. "The key element to success is having senior technical people who can engage with companies and commercial technologists for test and evaluation or beta-testing of early-stage products."

"With early-stage involvement, the consortium can influence some of the design to ensure greater suitability to the Depart-

ment of Defense applications," Lindsey said. "The importance of this activity to the warfighter cannot be overemphasized."

By combining rapid acquisition with high-level expertise in identification of ready technologies, the acquisition cycle duration is drastically reduced and improved capabilities are more quickly available to organization, field and theatre commanders. Ultimately, this consortium of recognized Department of Defense experts, in league with venture capital firms, will generate savings in both money and lives as the identified technologies are fielded earlier and at lower cost.

Lindsey participated in meetings representing the Air Force and, to some extent, the Defense Science Board's Wireless Task Force. Companies represented included Navini Networks, Omniva, Jabber, Aoptix, Aruba, Agitar, Celion, Salesforce.com, and ObserveNet. Significant outcomes from the AFRL perspective were identification of several companies and their products that have significant immediate potential for military utilization. @